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Things Fall Apart
BY CHINUA ACHEBE


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Name: _____

Date: _____

All references come from the Anchor Books edition of *Things Fall Apart*, copyright 1959.

Pre-Reading

Research

Objective: Placing a literary work within its historical context
Refining research skills by consulting a variety of sources

Activity 1

Before reading any work of literature, it is useful to know information regarding the novel's background. *Things Fall Apart*, written by Chinua Achebe and published in 1959, is set in Africa during the 1890s. Achebe based his story on the Ibo (Igbo) tribe of Nigeria.

In groups, research the following topics using all the different sources available:

- the treatment of woman and children among the Ibo tribe
- the use of music among the Ibo
- the use of parables and proverbs among the Ibo
- various tribal customs and beliefs of the Ibo
- the ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity of present day Nigeria
- the effects of colonialism of Africa in the late 1800s
- a geographical study and representation of Africa and Nigeria both in the late 1800s and today (maps, topography, crops, water, etc.)

After researching the Ibo tribe, present your findings to the class. Presentations can be in the form of oral reports, power point slide programs, or creative videos, and can include but are not limited to handouts, posters, overheads, charts, and maps.

Activity 2

Things Fall Apart is set in 1890s Nigeria. Use all available resources to research Nigeria as it was in the 1890s and as it is today. Based on your research, write a descriptive essay comparing the two cultures and indicating the cause and result of such changes.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Part One
Chapters 1-3

Characterization

Objective: Interpreting characterization of major characters

Activity

After reading the first three chapters of *Things Fall Apart*, the reader has a good sense of the personality of both Okonkwo and his father, Unoka. Follow the directions to complete a brief oral character sketch.

1. Imagine you are either Okonkwo or Unoka.
2. Go back through the first act and list all the details you can find about your character. Include any physical characteristics, mannerisms, traits revealed directly or indirectly (what other characters say or think about him), and your impressions of this character's voice.
3. Make a brief sketch of what you think your character looks like. (You may wish to research the clothing of the Ibo tribe in 1890s Nigeria.)
4. Write a one-page sketch from your character's perspective that begins and ends with the same statement: "I am _____." Create a monologue about who your character believes himself to be.
5. Be prepared to deliver your monologue to the class. Use appropriate oral presentation techniques, such as speaking in a clear and audible tone, making eye contact, and using effective gestures.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 4**A Man's Fate****Objective:** Assessing character's personality**Activity**

This chapter of *Things Fall Apart* continues to reveal more insight into Okonkwo's character, his personal beliefs, and his values. The author reiterates the importance of a man's *chi*, or personal god as he explains that Okonkwo "deserved his success,...That was not luck." (Pg. 27)

Imagine you are an astrologer; write a horoscope for Okonkwo based on his primary character traits revealed in this chapter.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 4-6**Writing Poetry****Objective:** Writing a poem based on literary events and character traits**Activity**

Okonkwo, the novel's main character, is a tragic hero whose strengths become weaknesses. In these three chapters, the reader watches as Okonkwo's pride takes the form of anger, which causes his family and tribe to lose respect for him.

- Locate and list at least five references to Okonkwo's anger and include the page number. One has been done for you.
 - Write a poem based on the word ANGER that reveals to the reader either your feelings about Okonkwo or the plot of the novel so far.
1. "When Okonkwo heard that he [Ikemefuna] would not eat any food he came into the hut with a big stick in his hand and stood over him while he swallowed his yams, trembling." (Pg. 27-28)

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 9

Names

Objective: Relating literature to life

Activity

Okonkwo's second wife Ekwefi "had suffered a good deal in her life. She had borne ten children and nine of them had died in infancy, usually before the age of three." (Pg. 77) This misfortune is attributed to *ogbanjie*, wicked children who are repeatedly reincarnated. Because of the deaths, Ekwefi gives her children names that reflect her belief in the reincarnation process. In addition, names are so important to the members of the Ibo tribe that they hold naming ceremonies seven weeks after the birth of a child.

Make a list of the Top Ten Names of the past few years.

TOP TEN NAMES

Girls Names	Boys Names

Reflection: Write an essay answering the following questions:

Why do you think these names are so common today? Do you know the meaning or folklore behind any of the names? Look up the meanings of some of the names. Do the meanings reflect anyone you know who has that name? Why do you think some names are more popular than others? What does your name mean? Why did your parents give you this name? If you could change your name, what would you change it to? Why would you choose this name?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 1-13

Titles

Objective: Identifying main ideas and themes

Activity

Some authors use chapter titles to give an overview of the chapter's content or to point toward a significant incident or theme. Sometimes, a chapter title is taken directly from the dialogue or descriptions in the story. For example, Chapter 1 of *Things Fall Apart* could have been entitled "The Successful Son."

After you have read chapters one through thirteen, write a title for each chapter to help you summarize what you have read. Then, come up with an original title for Part 1 (Chapters 1–13).

Title Chart for Chapters One through Thirteen

Chapter	Your Title
One	
Two	
Three	
Four	
Five	
Six	
Seven	
Eight	
Nine	
Ten	
Eleven	
Twelve	
Thirteen	
Part One (Chapters 1-13)	